

Transitioning Victims to ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit (VRU)

Ensuring the Successful Transition
of Registered Victims to ADJC

Purpose:

The goal of this presentation is to promote a seamless transition of services to eligible victims as their case moves from the county system to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC).

Purpose (cont'd):

This presentation will highlight the information that ADJC needs to serve eligible victims of both “new” offenses (current adjudicated offenses) and “old” offenses (prior offenses for which a youth was put on probation).

ADJC's Outreach to Victims:

Per statute (A.R.S. 8-386), all victims should receive a “Victims’ Rights Request/Waiver” form as soon as possible after the offense occurs. This form allows victims the opportunity to “opt in,” or register, for victims’ rights services and notifications.

ADJC's Outreach to Victims (cont'd):

Unfortunately, sometimes victims don't understand the registration process, or don't opt in for various reasons.

ADJC's Outreach to Victims (cont'd):

For many victims, by the time their case gets through the court system and the youth is adjudicated to ADJC, they are overwhelmed with all of the processes, paperwork, and proceedings. Some victims mistakenly assume that the youth's commitment to ADJC is the end of their involvement in their case. Finally, once the youth is locked-up, some victims have an "out of sight, out of mind" mentality.

ADJC's Outreach to Victims (cont'd):

The reality, however, is that commitment to ADJC simply means a period of confinement in a secure care environment, followed by a release to the community. When a youth is released prior to turning 18, the youth is generally subject to conditions of supervision (i.e., parole), during which time victims' concerns often resurface.

ADJC's Outreach to Victims (cont'd):

For all of these reasons, ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit attempts to send outreach packets to victims of adjudicated offenses whenever possible, so that they have every opportunity to opt in to the system and secure their rights as victims. With some assistance from the referring county, ADJC can send an outreach packet to victim(s) of any youth committed to ADJC.

ADJC's Outreach to Victims (cont'd):

These outreach packets contain:

- **a “Victims’ Rights Request/Waiver” form;**
- **a brochure on ADJC’s Victims’ Rights Unit;**
- **a copy of the legal rights of victims;**
- **a letter introducing the ADJC Victims’ Rights Unit and the services they can provide.**

Outreach to Victims of “New” Offenses:

For ADJC’s Victims’ Rights Unit to conduct outreach efforts to victims of “new” offenses (not probation violations), the committing county needs to send the VRU the following information:

Youth’s name and DOB;

Committing (i.e., adjudicated) offense;

Victim contact information (address and phone #).

Outreach to Victims of “New” Offenses:

Any of the following information would also be helpful:

A copy of the victim impact statement or a summary of the victim’s concerns (example: victim lives nextdoor to offender, etc);

Pending orders that affect the victim;

Comments or recommendations from the county advocate regarding victim issues and concerns.

Outreach to Victims of “New” Offenses:

When counties provide this information for youth committed to ADJC from their courts, ADJC’s Victims’ Rights Unit will send an outreach packet to the victim(s), thus ensuring that the victim(s) have every opportunity to register for services.

Process for Victims of “Old” Offenses:

One area that ADJC would like to improve upon is ensuring a seamless transition of services to victims of youth(s) who are adjudicated to ADJC on probation violation(s).

A.R.S. 8-396 (B) states:

“If a victim has requested post-adjudication notice and probation is revoked, the court shall provide a copy of the victim's request for post-adjudication notice to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC).”

What A.R.S. 8-396 (B) means:

When a youth's probation is revoked and the youth is sent to ADJC, any prior registered victim(s) for that youth should be automatically transitioned to ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit. It is important to note that the prior victim(s) do not need to "re-register" with ADJC—their rights as victims automatically transfer to ADJC when the youth enters into ADJC jurisdiction.

For example:

Youth A is currently on probation with the county, and has two registered victims. If Youth A commits a new offense, and is sent to ADJC, the two registered victims for the prior offense(s) should be automatically transitioned to ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit.

Please note that these rules apply only to previously registered victims of adjudicated offenses.

Processes for Transitioning Victims of Prior Offenses:

**When a youth's probation is
revoked and the youth is committed
to ADJC, the referring county
should do the following:**

Processes for Transitioning Victims of Prior Offenses (cont'd):

- 1. Check for all registered/opted-in victims for that youth;**

Processes for Transitioning Victims of Prior Offenses (cont'd):

- 2. Send copies of all victim-related information to ADJC. At minimum, the county should send ADJC the following information on all probation violations that have opted-in victims:**

Information to send to ADJC (cont'd):

A. Contact information for the victim(s). This should include:

- a printout version of the victim screen(s) from JOLTS (if available), or;
- a copy of the “Victims’ Rights Request/Waiver” form originally filled out by the victim.

Contact information should include the last known address and phone number for the victim(s).

Information to send to ADJC (cont'd):

- B. An indication of the adjudicated offense associated with each victim. ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit needs to be able to identify the adjudicated offense(s) related to each victim.**

Information to send to ADJC (cont'd):

C. Any other relevant information that will help ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit serve the victim(s):

- restitution balances
- court-related orders (sex offender registration, orders of protection, etc.)
- primary concerns for victim(s) (safety, relationship b/t youth and victim(s), victim's proximity to offender's home, etc.)

The more information you can provide to help ADJC serve victims, the better.

Please remember!

Per statute, when a youth's probation is revoked and the youth is sent to ADJC, ADJC should automatically receive information on all registered victims for prior adjudicated offenses!

Conclusion



This presentation has highlighted the procedures necessary for effectively transitioning victims from the county level to ADJC's Victims' Rights Unit.

Questions?

**If you have any questions about
these procedures, please contact:**

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